

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Charles Ruggiero on January 27, 2010.

The claims are amended as follows:

Claim 14. An absorbent pad for placement in a container comprising: a base panel; one or more side panels comprising a top sheet, a side panel bottom sheet, and one or more islands disposed between said top sheet and said side panel bottom sheet; a hinge, wherein said hinge connects an edge of said base panel to an edge of each of said one or more side panels to provide complete folding of said one or more side panels onto said base panel, wherein said one or more side panels cover at least a portion of a side of the container in which the absorbent pad is placed, and wherein said side panel bottom sheet allows fluid uptake therethrough.

EXAMINER'S COMMENT

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 14-16, 30 and 31 have been considered but are moot in view of the amendment to the claims.

Allowable Claims

3. Claims 14-16, 30 and 31 are allowed.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

4. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: Applicant amended claims 14 and 16 to recite that the side panel bottom sheet allows fluid uptake therethrough. The closest prior art of record, the Pribonic reference, teaches away from such a side panel bottom sheet. The side panel bottom sheet disclosed by Pribonic is fluid-impermeable and is intended to be a barrier to leakage of oil and other fluids. Therefore, modifying the article disclosed by Pribonic to meet the limitation of a side panel bottom sheet that allows fluid uptake would render the Pribonic article unsatisfactory for its intended purpose. One of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to make this modification to the Pribonic article and thus Pribonic neither discloses nor suggests the claimed absorbent pad.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MELANIE J. HAND whose telephone number is (571)272-6464. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Thurs 8:00-5:30, alternate Fridays 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tatyana Zalukaeva can be reached on 571-272-1115. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3761

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Melanie J Hand/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3761